



VOL 6: ISSUE 1



**MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ**

Just a few years ago, I had the privilege of appointing Travis County's first female Jail Administrator, Major Sally Pena. This week, I have the honor of wishing her a happy and blessed retirement. Major Pena literally grew up here at TCSO, dedicating her entire career to service within our jails.

In 1991, she was hired as a Corrections Officer, and worked her way up through the ranks to Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and ultimately to Major/Jail Administrator in 2018. In her impressive 30 years here at TCSO, she worked in almost every unit and building within the Corrections Bureau to include Central Booking, Buildings 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12, Records & Classification, Travis County Jail (downtown), Prisoner Transportation Unit and Corrections Security Threat Unit.

As she promoted into higher and higher ranks, she was routinely tasked with changing the culture to revitalize the staff in each building she supervised because her passion and wholehearted commitment to TCSO, her peers and the inmate population was that contagious.

Known for her very direct approach, she never forgot where she came from, and connected on a personal level with employees across the ranks. She served as a mentor and role model to countless staff, and the depth and breadth of her experiential knowledge is hard to match.



She will be greatly missed, but we are excited for her as she steps forward into new adventures. I could not be prouder to have served alongside her.

I'm pleased to announce that I have appointed Major Raul Banasco to serve as our new Jail Administrator. He has a distinguished history of leadership in both prisons and jails. I look forward to sharing more about our successes under his leadership in the months to come.



**VICTIM SERVICES VOLUNTEER AWARDS**



On Friday January 21<sup>st</sup>, our Victim Services Unit (VSU) celebrated its Volunteer Appreciation Event virtually. This annual occasion allows our Command Staff and VSU to applaud the efforts and time our volunteers dedicate to assisting victims of crimes and circumstances in Travis County. This year, the award and recognition recipients were John Barry, Cara Hubbard, Kathy Broussard, Jessie Vuksic and Bill Stueve. A special recognition was given to Rock Robinson for 25 years of services. Sergeant Ronnie Hawkins received the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award.

**SHIELD TRAINING**



Each year, the Sheriff's Institute for Ethical Leadership (SHIELD) offers managerial training to a select group of TCSO staff, both civilian and sworn. At the conclusion of the course, participants have the opportunity to present their proposal to the entire Command Staff on ways to improve a TCSO process. Many of these presentations have turned into wonderful projects benefiting the agency over the years. Just a few of this month's ideas include desk exercise equipment for dispatchers, a field training officer program geared toward detectives, and improved safety beacons for deputies in the field.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS**



On January 11<sup>th</sup>, TCSO joined the nation in wearing blue to bring awareness to [National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#). Human trafficking is the exploitation of vulnerable people for labor or sex through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Trafficking victims, many of whom are children, aren't limited to race, color, gender, or socioeconomic status. They are people you see every day. It can happen [here](#).

Sadly, Texas is one of the top states for human trafficking due to its size, ease of highway access and its shared border with Mexico. As part of the [Central Texas Human Trafficking Task Force](#), TCSO is committed to serving victims and apprehending traffickers.

There are many [indicators](#) that someone may be a victim or a potential victim of human trafficking; the Department of Homeland Security lists several on its website. If you are a victim or have information regarding the possibility of someone being in a trafficking situation, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1 (888) 373-7888 or contact them [online](#).

**MLK CELEBRATION**



TCSO Community Outreach had a blast celebrating with the community at the 2022 MLK Festival which takes place on the historic Huston-Tillotson University campus. This annual event, held on the holiday, commemorates the civil rights icon's legacy with live music performances throughout the day as well as a unique array of local vendors and merchants.

**TCOLE RECOGNITION**



On January 5<sup>th</sup>, the TCSO Academy received high praise from the [Texas Commission on Law Enforcement \(TCOLE\)](#). For three consecutive years, in both the peace officer and jail licensure programs, TCSO cadets have had a 100% pass rate on the state exam. The state will include TCSO in its FY2019-FY2021 published report as a recommended academy and encourage others to reach out for guidance and ideas. Well done, Academy Staff!

**HUMAN RESOURCES**



TCSO Human Resources supports nearly 1,700 staff in employee relations, hiring, utilizing benefits, keeping their licensure up-to-date, preparing for payroll, and many other critical areas. We're excited to welcome Shirelle Zachery as our new Director of HR. Shirelle joins us from Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources and has over 20 years of experience.

Additionally, we're proud that Senior Human Resources Assistant Michelle Ayala recently also became a Society of Human Resources Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP). She took an 11-week class to help prepare for this exam which consisted of questions about HR Core Competencies, People, Workplace and Leadership. These skills are critical to maintaining our HR office as a trusted resource for our valued staff.

**SHOUT OUT**

Sergeant Christina Botkin and our Corrections Security Threat Unit investigators were recognized by the Broward County Sheriff's Office STGIU Gang Intelligence Investigations for their collaborative work on best practices for intelligence collection, validation and dissemination processes.

Kudos on your dedication and exemplary work!